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VARIOUS.

Value of Art-objects in ancient Rome.

In the third part of L. Friedlander's "Manners and customs of Rome from the times of Augustus to the fall of the Antonines" (Hirzel, Leipzig) are found some notices of the prices given by the wealthy Romans of that period for works of art: they will not be without interest at the present moment, the most flourishing time perhaps ever known for commerce in these articles. Very strange to us appears their frequently adopted method of estimating bronze figures by the pound weight, the price of which was usually about 4 denarii. Our estimate, nowadays is by the intellectual pound, which alas, cannot be so strictly subjected to the scales. The figures could be obtained at so cheap a rate on account of the continually increasing production of them in whole sale manufacture, especially statues and monuments. In the time of Alexander the Great the average price of a statue seems to have been 3000 drachma (£ 117„ 18 s.). Dio of Prusa gives 1000 drachma (£ 39„ 6 s.) as the price for which a bronze statue might be had, or even 500 (£ 19„ 13 s.). For several statues of emperors and deities the price ranged from 3000 to 10000 sesterces (£ 32„ 12 s. to £ 108„ 15 s.). Tarifs were suspended in the factories and magazines for purchasers and commands. As to the honoraires of the artists we know that Lucullus ordered a statue of Felicitas from Arsecilaus a sculptor whom be patronised, the price of which was to be 60000 sesterces, (£ 651„ 10 s.). The same artist once sold a model of a milkjug for a talent (£ 135„ 15 s.).

Graphotyping.

The art of graphotyping, of which the *Times* gives the following description, had its origin in the accidental discovery, by Mr. De Witt Hitchcock, an American engraver, that it was possible to remove the white surface of an enamelled visiting card by means of a brush, leaving the inked letters in relief. He was hence led to conceive the idea of drawing upon a surface which might be similarly treated, so that the lines of the artist should remain prominent and capable of being copied by stereotype or electrotype, in a form that could be printed from in the usual way. For this purpose a surface is prepared by placing a layer of finely-powdered French chalk upon a zinc plate. A thick steel plate is then placed upon the powder, and the whole subjected to very strong pressure, equivalent to that of a weight of from 80 to 100 tons, in a hydraulic press. By this pressure the powder is compacted into a slab of a perfectly smooth surface, and of moderately coherent texture. The slab is further strenghtened by being moistened with size and dried in a hot chamber, and is then fit for the draughtsman, who draws upon it with a peculiar ink prepared for the purpose. The ink has two chief qualities. It remains fluid in the brush, so as to flow readily; but when deposited on the chalk it dries very rapidly, and hardens the chalk in drying. Hence, when a sketch is completed, the chalk lying between the lines can be rubbed away by a dry brush, while the lines themselves resist the friction and remain prominent. As soon as the interspaces have been cleared out to a sufficient depth, the plate is saturated with a chymical solution which renders it as hard as marble, and is then ready to furnish the mould for an electrotype. For this, a flat dish of sufficient size is filled with a melted mixture of beeswax, stearine, and lampblack, and as soon as the composition is sufficiently set, it is dusted over with finely-powdered plumbago, and the chalk plate is placed upon it face downwards, and hydraulic pressure is applied to force the composition into every line and point. The chalk plate is then lifted out, and the wax mould is placed in the cell of a galvanic battery, where copper is deposited upon it in the usual way. The copper is backed up with type metal, fitted to a wooden block, and the plate is then complete and ready to be used in an ordinary letterpress printing-machine. In this way plates for book illustration may be produced at small expense, and with the merit that they are absolute fac-similes of the work of the artist. Every line placed by him upon the chalk will be reproduced in the print with unimpeachable fidelity; and with no possibility of being altered or distorted in any of the intermediate processes. Besides this, the art is applied also to the reproduction of photographs; or, more correctly, the action of light is employed to supersede the work of the draughtsman upon the chalk. By this means accurate copies that are either larger or smaller than the originals can be obtained. The electrotyping cells derive their force from a magneto-electric machine, worked by a small steam engine; and the same machine feeds also an electric light in the photographing room, by which the operations are rendered independent of the solar beams or of the frequent murkiness of the atmosphere. Processes of colour printing have been lately introduced, and for these the principle of exact reproduction seems likely to be of great value. Some very good coloured cards and coloured pictures for advertisements were exhibited by the Graphotyping Company, at their works, but, perhaps, the most interesting work of this description has been in the way of designs for pottery supplied to Messrs. Minton, and transferred to tiles, dishes, and wares of various kinds. Patterns are also made for japanners of toilet hardware, and the possible applications of the graphotyping art seem to extend to almost every kind of decoration.

Photographic Toilet and Hat Rack.

A unique und ornamental design for a hat rack has been devised by Mr. William, Mc Eutyre, of North East (Erie Co.), Pennsylvania. It consists of a hat rack, which can either be suspended from the side of a wall or supplied with a suitable stand. At the sides are brackets for the supports of vases or toilet bottles. But the most novel feature of the design is that each of the pegs or supports for hats, coats, etc., has a place provided in the end, for the reception of a circular photograph, about two and a half inches in diameter. A family picture gallery may thus be placed in the rack, or the vacancies may be supplied with views of public places or other objects of interest.

Mr. Josiah Partridge, of 368 Pearl street, is the sole agent for New-York. *Scientific American.*

Ether Glue.

An excellent liquid glue is made by dissolving glue in nitric ether. The ether will only dissolve a certain amount of glue, consequently the solution cannot be made too thick.

The glue thus made is about the consistency of molasses, and is doubly as tenacious as that made with hot water. If a few bits of india rubber, cut into scraps the size of buckshot, be added, and the solution be allowed to stand a few days, being stirred frequently, it will be all the better, and will resist the dampness twice as well as glue made with water.

Scientific American.

Hanging Paper.

Carbolic acid is recommended by the »Journal of Applied Chemistry« as an ingredient in the paste used, as it will prevent the annoyance of insects and the sour smells frequently experienced in rooms newly papered.